This is the Book; in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear Allah

Al-Fatihah

Revealed in Makkah

The Meaning of Al-Fatehah and its Various Names

This Surah is called

- **Al-Fatihah**, that is, the Opener of the Book, the Surah with which prayers are begun.

- It is also called, **Umm Al-Kitab** (the Mother of the Book), according to the majority of the scholars.

In an authentic Hadith recorded by At-Tirmidhi, who graded it **Sahih**, **Abu Hurayrah** said that the Messenger of Allah said,

الْحَمْدُ للهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ أُمُّ الْقُرْآنِ وَأُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَالسَّبْعُ الْمَثَانِي وَالْقُرْآنُ الْعَظِيمُ

Al-Hamdu lillahi Rabbil-`Alamin is the Mother of the Qur'an, the Mother of the Book, and the seven repeated Ayat of the Glorious Qur'an.

It is also called **Al-Hamd** and **As-Salah**, because the Prophet said that his Lord said,

قَسَمْتُ الصَّلَاةَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ عَبْدِي نِصْفَيْنِ،

فَإِذَا قَالَ الْعَبْدُ: الْحَمْدُ لِلهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، قَالَ اللهُ: حَمِدَنِي عَبْدِي

The prayer (i.e., **Al-Fatihah**) is divided into two halves between Me and My servants.

When the servant says, `All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of existence,' Allah says, 'My servant has praised Me.

Al-Fatihah was called the **Salah**, because reciting it is a condition for the correctness of **Salah** - the prayer.

Al-Fatihah was also called **Ash-Shifa**' (the Cure).

It is also called **Ar-Ruqyah** (remedy), since in the Sahih, there is the narration of Abu Sa`id telling the story of the Companion who used **Al-Fatihah** as a remedy for the tribal chief who was poisoned. Later, the Messenger of Allah said to a Companion,

وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ أَنَّهَا رُقْيَةٌ

How did you know that it is a **Ruqyah**.

Al-Fatihah was revealed in Makkah as Ibn `Abbas, Qatadah and Abu Al-`Aliyah stated.

Allah said,

وَلَقَدْ ءاتَيْنَـكَ سَبْعًا مِّنَ الْمَثَانِي

And indeed, We have bestowed upon you the seven **Mathani** (seven repeatedly recited verses), (i.e. Surat **Al-Fatihah**) (15:87).

Allah knows best.

How many Ayat does Al-Fatihah Contain

There is no disagreement over the view that **Al-Fatihah** contains seven Ayat.

According to the majority of the reciters of Al-Kufah, a group of the Companions, the Tabi`in, and a number of scholars from the successive generations, the Bismillah is a separate Ayah in its beginning. We will mention this subject again soon, if Allah wills, and in Him we trust.

The Number of Words and Letters in Al-Fatihah

The scholars say that Al-Fatihah consists of twenty-five words, and that it contains one hundred and thirteen letters.

The Reason it is called Umm Al-Kitab

In the beginning of the Book of Tafsir, in his Sahih, Al-Bukhari said;

> "It is called **Umm Al-Kitab**, because the Qur'an starts with it and because the prayer is started by reciting it.''
>
> It was also said that it is called **Umm Al-Kitab**, because it contains the meanings of the entire Qur'an.
>
> Ibn Jarir said,
>
> > "The Arabs call every comprehensive matter that contains several specific areas an **Umm**. For instance, they call the skin that surrounds the brain, **Umm Ar-Ra's**. They also call the flag that gathers the ranks of the army an **Umm**.''
>
> He also said,
>
> > "Makkah was called **Umm Al-Qura**, (the Mother of the Villages) because it is the grandest and the leader of all villages.
>
> It was also said that the earth was made starting from Makkah.''

Further, Imam Ahmad recorded that Abu Hurayrah narrated about **Umm Al-Qur'an** that the Prophet said,

هِيَ أُمُّ الْقُرْآنِ وَهِيَ السَّبْعُ الْمَثَانِي وَهِيَ الْقُرْآنُ الْعَظِيمُ

> It is **Umm Al-Qur'an**, the seven repeated (verses) and the Glorious Qur'an.

Also, Abu Jafar, Muhammad bin Jarir At-Tabari recorded Abu Hurayrah saying that the Messenger of Allah said about Al-Fatihah,

هِيَ أُمُّ الْقُرْآنِ وَهِيَ فَاتِحَةُ الْكِتَابِ وَهِيَ السَّبْعُ الْمَثَانِي

It is **Umm Al-Qur'an**, **Al-Fatihah** of the Book (the Opener of the Qur'an) and the seven repeated (verses).

Virtues of Al-Fatihah

Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal recorded in the Musnad that Abu Sa`id bin Al-Mu`alla said,

"I was praying when the Prophet called me, so I did not answer him until I finished the prayer. I then went to him and he said, What prevented you from coming?

I said, 'O Messenger of Allah! I was praying.'

He said, Didn't Allah say,

يأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ اسْتَجِيبُواْ لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ

O you who believe! Answer Allah (by obeying Him) and (His) Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life.

He then said,

"I will teach you the greatest Surah in the Qur'an before you leave the Masjid (Mosque)."

He held my hand and when he was about to leave the Masjid, I said, `O Messenger of Allah! You said: I will teach you the greatest Surah in the Qur'an.'

He said, Yes الْحَمْدُ للّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ **Al-Hamdu lillahi Rabbil-`Alamin,**

نَعَمْ هِيَ السَّبْعُ الْمَثَانِي وَالْقُرْآنُ الْعَظِيمُ الَّذِي أُوتِيتُهُ

It is the seven repeated (verses) and the Glorious Qur'an that I was given.

Al-Bukhari, Abu Dawud, An-Nasa'i and Ibn Majah also recorded this Hadith.

Also, Imam Ahmad recorded that Abu Hurayrah said,

"The Messenger of Allah went out while Ubayy bin Ka`b was praying and said, O Ubayy!

Ubayy did not answer him.

The Prophet said, O Ubayy!

Ubayy prayed faster then went to the Messenger of Allah saying, `Peace be unto you, O Messenger of Allah!'

He said, Peace be unto you. O Ubayy, what prevented you from answering me when I called you?

He said, `O Messenger of Allah! I was praying.'

He said, Did you not read among what Allah has sent down to me,

اسْتَجِيبُواْ لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ

Answer Allah (by obeying Him) and (His) Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life.

He said, `Yes, O Messenger of Allah! I will not do it again.'

the Prophet said,

أَتُحِبُّ أَنْ أُعَلِّمَكَ سُورَةً لَمْ تَنْزِلْ لَا فِي التَّورَاةِ وَلَا فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ وَلَا فِي الزَّبُورِ وَلَا فِي الْفُرْقَانِ مِثْلَهَا؟

Would you like me to teach you a Surah the likes of which nothing has been revealed in the **Tawrah**, the **Injil**, the **Zabur** (Psalms) or the **Furqan** (the Qur'an)

He said, `Yes, O Messenger of Allah!'

The Messenger of Allah said, I hope that I will not leave through this door until you have learned it.

He (Ka`b) said, `The Messenger of Allah held my hand while speaking to me. Meanwhile I was slowing down fearing that he might reach the door before he finished his conversation. When we came close to the door, I said: O Messenger of Allah! What is the Surah that you have promised to teach me'

He said, What do you read in the prayer.

Ubayy said, `So I recited **Umm Al-Qur'an** to him.'

He said,

وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللهُ فِي التَّورَاةِ وَلَا فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ وَلَا فِي الزَّبُورِ وَلَا فِي الْفُرْقَانِ مِثْلَهَا إِنَّهَا السَّبْعُ الْمَثَانِي

By Him in Whose Hand is my soul! Allah has never revealed in the **Tawrah**, the **Injil**, the **Zabur** or the **Furqan** a Surah like it. It is the seven repeated verses that I was given.''

Also, At-Tirmidhi recorded this Hadith and in his narration, the Prophet said,

إِنَّهَا مِنَ السَّبْعِ الْمَثَانِي وَالْقُرْآنِ الْعَظِيمِ الَّذِي أُعْطِيتُهُ

It is the seven repeated verses and the Glorious Qur'an that I was given.

At-Tirmidhi then commented that this Hadith is **Hasan Sahih**.

There is a similar Hadith on this subject narrated from Anas bin Malik.

Further, `Abdullah, the son of Imam Ahmad, recorded this Hadith from Abu Hurayrah from Ubayy bin Ka`b, and he mentioned a longer but similar wording for the above Hadith.

In addition, At-Tirmidhi and An-Nasa'i recorded this Hadith from Abu Hurayrah from Ubayy bin Ka`b who said that the Messenger of Allah said,

مَا أَنْزَلَ اللهُ فِي التَّوراَةِ وَلَا فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ مِثْلَ أُمِّ الْقُرْآنِ وَهِيَ السَّبْعُ الْمَثَانِي وَهِيَ مَقْسُومَةٌ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ عَبْدِي نِصْفَيْنِ

Allah has never revealed in the **Tawrah** or the **Injil** anything similar to **Umm Al-Qur'an**. It is the seven repeated verses and it is divided into two halves between Allah and His servant.

This is the wording reported by An-Nasa'i.

At-Tirmidhi said that this Hadith is **Hasan Gharib**.

Also, Imam Ahmad recorded that Ibn Jabir said,

"I went to the Messenger of Allah after he had poured water (for purification) and said, `Peace be unto you, O Messenger of Allah!'

He did not answer me. So I said again, `Peace be unto you, O Messenger of Allah!'

Again, he did not answer me, so I said again, `Peace be unto you, O Messenger of Allah!'

Still he did not answer me.

The Messenger of Allah went while I was following him, until he arrived at his residence. I went to the Masjid and sat there sad and depressed. The Messenger of Allah came out after he performed his purification and said,

Peace and Allah's mercy be unto you,

peace and Allah's mercy be unto you,

peace and Allah's mercy be unto you.

He then said,

O `Abdullah bin Jabir! Should I inform you of the best Surah in the Qur'an.

I said, `Yes, O Messenger of Allah!'

He said, Read,

`All praise be to Allah, the Lord of the existence,' until you finish it. ''

This Hadith has a good chain of narrators.

Some scholars relied on this Hadith as evidence that some Ayat and Surahs have more virtues than others.

Furthermore, in the chapter about the virtues of the Qur'an, Al-Bukhari recorded that Abu Sa`id Al-Khudri said,

"Once, we were on a journey when a female servant came and said, `The leader of this area has been poisoned and our people are away. Is there a healer among you' Then a man whose healing expertise did not interest us stood for her, he read a **Ruqyah** for him, and he was healed.

The chief gave him thirty sheep as a gift and some milk. When he came back to us we said to him,

`You know of a (new) **Ruqyah**, or did you do this before?'

He said, `I only used **Umm Al-Kitab** as **Ruqyah**.'

We said, `Do not do anything further until we ask the Messenger of Allah.'

When we went back to Al-Madinah we mentioned what had happened to the Prophet . The Prophet said,

وَمَا كَانَ يُدْرِيهِ أَنَّهَا رُقْيَةٌ اقسِمُوا وَاضْرِبُوا لِي بِسَهْمٍ

Who told him that it is a **Ruqyah.** Divide (the sheep) and reserve a share for me.''

Also, Muslim recorded in his Sahih, and An-Nasa'i in his Sunan that Ibn `Abbas said,

"While Jibril (Gabriel) was with the Messenger of Allah , he heard a noise from above. Jibril lifted his sight to the sky and said,

`This is a door in heaven being open, and it has never been opened before now.'

An angel descended from that door and came to the Prophet and said,

`Receive the glad tidings of two lights that you have been given, which no other Prophet before you was given:

- the Opening of the Book and
- the last (three) Ayat of **Surat Al-Baqarah**.

You will not read a letter of them, but will gain its benefit.'''

This is the wording collected by An-Nasa'i (Al-Kubra 5:12) and Muslim recorded similar wording (1:554).

Al-Fatihah and the Prayer

Muslim recorded that Abu Hurayrah said that the Prophet said,

مَنْ صَلَّى صَلَاةً لَمْ يَقْرَأْ فِيهَا أُمَّ الْقُرْآنِ فَهِيَ خِدَاجٌ ثَلَاثًا غَيْرُ تَمَامٍ

Whoever performs any prayer in which he did not read **Umm Al-Qur'an**, then his prayer is incomplete.

He said it thrice.

Abu Hurayrah was asked, "When we stand behind the Imam''

He said, "Read it to yourself, for I heard the Messenger of Allah say,

قَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: قَسَمْتُ الصَّلَاةَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ عَبْدِي نِصْفَيْنِ وَلِعَبْدِي مَا سَأَلَ

Allah, the Exalted, said, `I have divided the prayer (**Al-Fatihah**) into two halves between Myself and My servant, and My servant shall have what he asks for.'

If he says, الْحَمْدُ للَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَلَمِينَ (All praise and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of existence.

قَالَ اللهُ: حَمِدَنِي عَبْدِي،

Allah says, `My servant has praised Me.'

When the servant says, الرَّحْمَـنِ الرَّحِيمِ The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

قَالَ اللهُ: أَثنى عَلَيَّ عَبْدِي،

Allah says, `My servant has glorified Me.'

When he says, مَـلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ The Owner of the Day of Recompense.

قَالَ اللهُ: مَجَّدَنِي عَبْدِي وقَالَ مَرَّةً: فَوَّضَ إِلَيَّ عَبْدِي

Allah says, `My servant has glorified Me,' or `My servant has related all matters to Me.'

When he says, إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ You (alone) we worship, and You (alone) we ask for help.

قَالَ: هذَا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ عَبْدِي ولِعَبْدِي مَا سَأَلَ

Allah says, `This is between Me and My servant, and My servant shall acquire what he sought.'

When he says, اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ Guide us to the straight path. صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلاَ الضَّآلِّينَ The way of those on whom You have granted Your grace, not (the way) of those who earned Your anger, nor of those who went astray,

قَالَ اللهُ: هذَا لِعَبْدِي ولِعَبْدِي مَا سَأَلَ

Allah says, `This is for My servant, and My servant shall acquire what he asked for.'.''

These are the words of An-Nasa'i, while both Muslim and An-Nasa'i collected the following wording,

"A half of it is for Me and a half for My servant, and My servant shall acquire what he asked for.''

Explaining this Hadith

The last Hadith used the word **Salah** `prayer' in reference to reciting the Qur'an, (**Al-Fatihah** in this case) just as Allah said in another Ayah,

وَلاَ تَجْهَرْ بِصَلاَتِكَ وَلاَ تُخَافِتْ بِهَا وَابْتَغِ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلاً

And offer your **Salah** (prayer) neither aloud nor in a low voice, but follow a way between.

meaning, with your recitation of the Qur'an, as the Sahih related from Ibn `Abbas.

Also, in the last Hadith, Allah said,

"I have divided the prayer between Myself and My servant into two halves, a half for Me and a half for My servant. My servant shall have what he asked for.''

Allah next explained the division that involves reciting **Al-Fatihah**, demonstrating the importance of reciting the Qur'an during the prayer, which is one of the prayer's greatest pillars. Hence, the word `prayer' was used here although only a part of it was actually being referred to, that is, reciting the Qur'an.

Similarly, the word `recite' was used where prayer is meant, as demonstrated by Allah's statement,

وَقُرْءَانَ الْفَجْرِ إِنَّ قُرْءَانَ الْفَجْرِ كَانَ مَشْهُودًا

And recite the Qur'an in the early dawn. Verily, the recitation of the Qur'an in the early dawn is ever witnessed.

in reference to the **Fajr** prayer, the Two Sahihs recorded that the angels of the night and the day attend this prayer.

Reciting Al-Fatihah is required in Every Rak`ah of the Prayer

All of these facts testify to the requirement that reciting the Qur'an (**Al-Fatihah**) in the prayer is required, and there is a consensus between the scholars on this ruling. The Hadith that we mentioned also testifies to this fact, for the Prophet said,

مَنْ صَلَّى صَلَاةً لَمْ يَقْرَأْ فِيهَا بِأُمِّ الْقُرْآنِ فَهِيَ خِدَاجٌ

> Whoever performs any prayer in which he did not recite **Umm Al-Qur'an**, his prayer is incomplete.

Also, the Two Sahihs recorded that `Ubadah bin As-Samit said that the Messenger of Allah said,

لَا صَلَاةَ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَقْرَأْ بِفَاتِحَةِ الْكِتَابِ

> There is no prayer for whoever does not recite the Opening of the Book.

Also, the Sahihs of Ibn Khuzaymah and Ibn Hibban recorded that Abu Hurayrah said that the Messenger of Allah said,

لَا تُجْزِئُ صَلَاةٌ لَا يُقْرَأُ فِيهَا بِأُمِّ الْقُرآنِ

> The prayer during which **Umm Al-Qur'an** is not recited is invalid.

There are many other Hadiths on this subject. Therefore, reciting the Opening of the Book, during the prayer by the Imam and those praying behind him, is required in every prayer, and in every Rak`ah.

The Tafsir of Isti`adhah (Seeking Refuge)

Allah said,

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَـهِلِينَ

وَإِمَّا يَنزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَـنِ نَزْغٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

> Show forgiveness, enjoin what is good, and stay away from the foolish (i.e. don't punish them).

And if an evil whisper comes to you from Shaytan (Satan), then seek refuge with Allah. Verily, He is Hearing, Knowing. (7:199-200),

ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِى هِىَ أَحْسَنُ السَّيِّئَةَ نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَصِفُونَ

وَقُلْ رَّبِّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيـطِينِ

وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ رَبِّ أَن يَحْضُرُونِ

Repel evil with that which is better. We are Best-Acquainted with things they utter. And say:

"My Lord!

I seek refuge with You from the whisperings (suggestions) of the Shayatin (devils).

And I seek refuge with You, My Lord! lest they should come near me.'' (23:96-98)

and,

وَلاَ تَسْتَوِى الْحَسَنَةُ وَلاَ السَّيِّئَةُ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِى هِىَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِى بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِىٌّ حَمِيمٌ

وَمَا يُلَقَّاهَا إِلاَّ الَّذِينَ صَبَرُواْ وَمَا يُلَقَّاهَآ إِلاَّ ذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ

وَإِمَّا يَنزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَـنِ نَزْغٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

Repel (an evil) with one which is better, then verily he with whom there was enmity between you, (will become) as though he was a close friend.

But none is granted it except those who are patient - and none is granted it except the owner of the great portion (of happiness in the Hereafter, i.e. Paradise and of a high moral character) in this world.

And if an evil whisper from Shaytan tries to turn you away (O Muhammad) (from doing good), then seek refuge in Allah. Verily, He is the Hearing, the Knowing. (41:34-36)

These are the only three Ayat that carry this meaning. Allah commanded that we be lenient human enemy, so that his soft nature might make him an ally and a supporter.

He also commanded that

we seek refuge from the satanic enemy, because the devil does not relent in his enmity if we treat him with kindness and leniency. The devil only seeks the destruction of the Son of Adam due to the vicious enmity and hatred he has always had towards man's father, Adam.

Allah said,

يَـبَنِى آدَمَ لاَ يَفْتِنَنَّكُمُ الشَّيْطَـنُ كَمَآ أَخْرَجَ أَبَوَيْكُم مِّنَ الْجَنَّةِ

O Children of Adam!

Let not Shaytan deceive you, as he got your parents (Adam and Hawwa' (Eve)) out of Paradise. (7:27),

إِنَّ الشَّيْطَـنَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ فَاتَّخِذُوهُ عَدُوّاً إِنَّمَا يَدْعُو حِزْبَهُ لِيَكُونُواْ مِنْ أَصْحَـبِ السَّعِيرِ

Surely, Shaytan is an enemy to you, so take (treat) him as an enemy. He only invites his **Hizb** (followers) that they may become the dwellers of the blazing Fire. (35:6)

and,

أَفَتَتَّخِذُونَهُ وَذُرِّيَّتَهُ أَوْلِيَآءَ مِن دُونِى وَهُمْ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ بِئْسَ لِلظَّـلِمِينَ بَدَلاً

Will you then take him (Iblis) and his offspring as protectors and helpers rather than Me while they are enemies to you. What an evil is the exchange for the **Zalimun** (polytheists, and wrongdoers, etc). (18:50)

The devil assured Adam that he wanted to advise him, but he was lying. Hence, how would he treat us after he had vowed,

فَبِعِزَّتِكَ لأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَإِلاَّ عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِينَ

"By Your might, then I will surely, mislead them all. Except Your chosen servants among them (i.e. faithful, obedient, true believers of Islamic Monotheism).'' (38:82-83)

Also, Allah said,

فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْءَانَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَـنِ الرَّجِيمِ

إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

إِنَّمَا سُلْطَـنُهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَوَلَّوْنَهُ وَالَّذِينَ هُم بِهِ مُشْرِكُونَ

So when you (want to) recite the Qur'an, seek refuge with Allah from Shaytan, the outcast (the cursed one).

Verily, he has no power over those who believe and put their trust only in their Lord (Allah).

His power is only over those who obey and follow him (Satan), and those who join partners with Him. (16:98-100).

Seeking Refuge before reciting the Qur'an

Allah said,

فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْءَانَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَـنِ الرَّجِيمِ

So when you (want to) recite the Qur'an, seek refuge with Allah from Shaytan, the outcast (the cursed one).

meaning, before you recite the Qur'an.

Similarly, Allah said,

إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَوةِ فاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ

When you intend to offer **As-Salah** (the prayer), wash your faces and your hands (forearms) (5:6)

meaning, before you stand in prayer, as evident by the Hadiths that we mentioned.

Imam Ahmad recorded that Abu Sa`id Al-Khudri said,

"When the Messenger of Allah would stand up in prayer at night, he would start his prayer with the **Takbir** (saying **"Allahu Akbar"**; Allah is Greater) and would then supplicate,

All praise is due to You, O Allah, and also the thanks. Blessed be Your Name, Exalted be Your sovereignty, and there is no deity worthy of worship except You.

He would then say thrice,

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ

There is no deity worthy of worship except Allah.

He would then say,

أَعُوذُ بِاللهِ السَّمِيعِ الْعَلِيمِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ مِنْ هَمْزِهِ وَنَفْخِهِ وَنَفْثِهِ

I seek refuge with Allah, the Hearing, the Knowing, from the cursed Satan, from his coercion, lures to arrogance and poems."

The four collectors of the Sunan recorded this Hadith, which At-Tirmidhi considered the most famous Hadith on this subject.

Abu Dawud and Ibn Majah recorded that Jubayr bin Mut`im said that his father said, "When the Messenger of Allah started the prayer, he said,

اللهُ أَكْبَرُ كَبِيرًا ثَلَاثًا

Allah is the Greater, truly the Greatest (thrice);

الْحَمْدُ لِلهِ كَثِيرًا ثَلَاثًا

all praise is due to Allah always (thrice);

سُبْحَانَ اللهِ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا ثَلَاثًا

and all praise is due to Allah day and night (thrice).

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ مِنْ هَمْزِهِ وَنَفْخِهِ وَنَفْثِهِ

O Allah! I seek refuge with You from the cursed Satan, from his **Hamz, Nafkh** and **Nafth**.).''

Amr said,

The **Hamz** means asphyxiation,

the **Nafkh** means arrogance, and

the **Nafth** means poetry.''

Also, Ibn Majah recorded that `Ali bin Al-Mundhir said that Ibn Fudayl narrated that `Ata' bin As-Sa'ib said that Abu `Abdur-Rahman As-Sulami said that Ibn Mas`ud said that the Prophet said,

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَجِيمِ وَهَمْزِهِ وَنَفْخِهِ وَنَفْثِهِ

O Allah!

I seek refuge with You from the cursed devil, from his **Hamz**, **Nafkh** and **Nafth**.

He said,

The **Hamz** means death,

the **Nafkh** means arrogance, and

the **Nafth** means poetry.''

Seeking Refuge with Allah when One is Angry

In his Musnad, Al-Hafiz Abu Ya`la Ahmad bin `Ali bin Al-Muthanna Al-Mawsili reported that Ubayy bin Ka`b said,

"Two men disputed with each other in the presence of the Messenger of Allah and the nose of one of them became swollen because of extreme anger. The Messenger of Allah said,

I know of some words that if he said them, what he feels will go away,

'I seek refuge with Allah from the cursed Satan.'''

An-Nasa'i also recorded this Hadith in his book, Al-Yawm wal-Laylah.

Al-Bukhari recorded that Sulayman bin Surad said,

"Two men disputed in the presence of the Prophet while we were sitting with him. One of them was cursing the other fellow and his face turned red due to anger. The Prophet said,

إِنِّي لَأَعْلَمُ كَلِمَةً لَوْ قَالَهَا لَذَهَبَ عَنْهُ مَا يَجِدُ، لَوْ قَالَ:

I know of a statement which if he said it, will make what he feels disappear,

أَعُوذُ بِاللهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

'I seek refuge with Allah from the cursed Satan.'''

They said to the man, `Do you not hear what the Messenger of Allah is saying'

He said, `I am not insane.'''

Also, Muslim, Abu Dawud and An-Nasa'i recorded this Hadith.

There are many other Hadiths about seeking refuge with Allah. One can find this subject in the books on supplication and the virtues of righteous, good deeds.

Is the Isti`adhah (seeking Refuge) required

The majority of the scholars state that reciting the **Isti`adhah** (in the prayer and when reciting the Qur'an) is recommended

and not required, and therefore, not reciting it does not constitute a sin.

However, Ar-Razi recorded that `Ata' bin Abi Rabah said that the **Isti`adhah** is required

- in the prayer and

- when one reads the Qur'an.

In support of `Ata's statement, Ar-Razi relied upon the apparent meaning of the Ayah, فَاسْتَعِذْ Then seek refuge.

He said that the Ayah contains a command that requires implementation.

Also, the Prophet always said the **Isti`adhah**.

In addition, the **Isti`adhah** wards off the evil of Satan, which is necessary, the rule is that the means needed to implement a requirement of the religion is itself also required. And when one says, "I seek refuge with Allah from the cursed devil.'' Then this will suffice.

Virtues of the Isti`adhah

- The **Isti`adhah** cleanses the mouth from the foul speech that it has indulged in.

- It also purifies the mouth and prepares it to recite the speech of Allah.

- Further, the **Isti`adhah** entails seeking Allah's help and acknowledging His ability to do everything.

- The **Isti`adhah** also affirms the servant's meekness, weakness and inability to face the enemy of his inner evil, whom Allah alone, Who created this enemy, is able to repel and defeat. This enemy does not accept kindness, unlike the human enemy.

There are three Ayat in the Qur'an that affirm this fact.

Also, Allah said,

إِنَّ عِبَادِى لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَـنٌ وَكَفَى بِرَبِّكَ وَكِيلاً

> Verily, My servants (i.e. the true believers of Islamic Monotheism) - you have no authority over them. And sufficient is your Lord as a Guardian. (17:65).

We should state here that the believers, whom the human enemies kill, become martyrs, while those who fall victim to the inner enemy - Satan - become bandits.

Further, the believers who are defeated by the apparent enemy - disbelievers - gain a reward, while those defeated by the inner enemy earn a sin and become misguided.

Since Satan sees man where man cannot see him, it is befitting that the believers seek refuge from Satan with Whom Satan cannot see.

The **Isti`adhah** is a form of drawing closer to Allah and seeking refuge with Him from the evil of every evil creature.

What does Isti`adhah Mean

Isti`adhah means,

> "I seek refuge with Allah from the cursed Satan so that he is prevented from affecting my religious or worldly affairs, or hindering me from adhering to what I was commanded, or luring me into what I was prohibited from."

Indeed, only Allah is able to prevent the evil of Satan from touching the son of Adam. This is why Allah allowed us to be lenient and kind with the human devil, so that his soft nature might cause him to refrain from the evil he is indulging in. However, Allah required us to seek refuge with Him from the evil of Satan, because he neither accepts bribes nor does kindness affect him, for he is pure evil. Thus, only He Who created Satan is able to stop his evil.

This meaning is reiterated in only three Ayat in the Qur'an. Allah said in Surah Al-A`raf,

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَـهِلِينَ

> Show forgiveness, enjoin what is good, and turn away from the foolish (i.e. don't punish them). (7:199)

This is about dealing with human beings.

He then said in the same Surah,

وَإِمَّا يَنزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَـنِ نَزْغٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

> And if an evil whisper comes to you from Shaytan, then seek refuge with Allah. Verily, He is Hearing, Knowing. (7: 200)

Allah also said in Surah Al-Mu'minun,

ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِى هِىَ أَحْسَنُ السَّيِّئَةَ نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَصِفُونَ

وَقُلْ رَّبِّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيـطِينِ

وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ رَبِّ أَن يَحْضُرُونِ

> Repel evil with that which is better. We are Best-Acquainted with the things they utter. And say:
>
> "My Lord!
>
> I seek refuge with You from the whisperings (suggestions) of the Shayatin (devils).
>
> And I seek refuge with You, My Lord! lest they should come near me.'' (23:96-98)

Further, Allah said in Surah As-Sajdah,

وَلاَ تَسْتَوِى الْحَسَنَةُ وَلاَ السَّيِّئَةُ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِى هِىَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِى بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِىٌّ حَمِيمٌ

وَمَا يُلَقَّاهَا إِلاَّ الَّذِينَ صَبَرُواْ وَمَا يُلَقَّاهَآ إِلاَّ ذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ

وَإِمَّا يَنزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَـنِ نَزْغٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

> The good deed and the evil deed cannot be equal. Repel (the evil) with one which is better, then verily he, between whom and you there was enmity, (will become) as though he was a close friend.
>
> But none is granted it (the above quality) except those who are patient - and none is granted it except the owner

of the great portion (of happiness in the Hereafter, i.e. Paradise and of a high moral character) in this world.

And if an evil whisper from Shaytan tries to turn you away (from doing good), then seek refuge in Allah. Verily, He is the Hearing, the Knowing. (41:34-36).

Why the Devil is called Shaytan

In the Arabic language, Shaytan is derived from **Shatana**, which means the far thing. Hence, the Shaytan has a different nature than mankind, and his sinful ways are far away from every type of righteousness.

It was also said that Shaytan is derived from **Shata**, (literally \`burned'), because it was created from fire.

Some scholars said that both meanings are correct, although they state that the first meaning is more plausible.

Further, Siybawayh (the renowned Arab linguistic) said, "The Arabs say, \`So-and-so has **Tashaytan**,' when he commits the act of the devils. If Shaytan was derived from **Shata**, they would have said, **Tashayyata** (rather than **Tashaytan**)." Hence, Shaytan is derived from the word that means, far away. This is why they call those who are rebellious (or mischievous) from among the Jinns and mankind a \`Shaytan'.

Allah said,

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نِبِىٍّ عَدُوّاً شَيَـطِينَ الإِنسِ وَالْجِنِّ يُوحِى بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ زُخْرُفَ الْقَوْلِ غُرُوراً

And so We have appointed for every Prophet enemies - **Shayatin** (devils) among mankind and Jinn, inspiring one another with adorned speech as a delusion (or by way of deception) (6:112).

In addition, the Musnad by Imam Ahmad records that Abu Dharr said that the Messenger of Allah said,

يَا أَبَا ذَرّ تَعَوَّذْ بِاللهِ مِنْ شَيَاطِينِ الْإِنْسِ وَالْجِنِّ

O Abu Dharr! Seek refuge with Allah from the devils of mankind and the Jinns.

Abu Dharr said, "I asked him , `Are there human devils?'

He said, Yes.''

Furthermore, it is recorded in Sahih Muslim that Abu Dharr said that the Messenger of Allah said,

يَقْطَعُ الصَّلَاةَ الْمَرْأَةُ وَالْحِمَارُ وَالْكَلْبُ الْأَسْوَدُ

The woman, the donkey and the black dog interrupt the prayer (if they pass in front of those who do not pray behind a Sutrah, i.e. a barrier.

Abu Dharr said,

"I said, `What is the difference between the black dog and the red or yellow dog' He said,

الْكَلْبُ الْأَسْوَدُ شَيْطَانٌ

The black dog is a devil. ''

Also, Ibn Jarir At-Tabari recorded that

Umar bin Al-Khattab once rode a **Berthawn** (huge camel) which started to proceed arrogantly. `Umar kept striking the animal, but the animal kept walking in an arrogant manner. `Umar dismounted the animal and said,

"By Allah! You have carried me on a Shaytan. I did not come down from it until after I had felt something strange in my heart.''

This Hadith has an authentic chain of narrators.

The Meaning of Ar-Rajim

Ar-Rajim means, being expelled from all types of righteousness.

Allah said,

وَلَقَدْ زَيَّنَّا السَّمَآءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَـبِيحَ وَجَعَلْنَـهَا رُجُوماً لِّلشَّيَـطِينِ

And indeed We have adorned the nearest heaven with lamps, and We have made such lamps **Rujuman** (as missiles) to drive away the Shayatin (devils). (67:5)

Allah also said,

إِنَّا زَيَّنَّا السَّمَآءَ الدُّنْيَا بِزِينَةٍ الْكَوَكِبِ

وَحِفْظاً مِّن كُلِّ شَيْطَـنٍ مَّارِدٍ

لاَّ يَسَّمَّعُونَ إِلَى الْمَلإِ الاٌّعْلَى وَيُقْذَفُونَ مِن كُلِّ جَانِبٍ

دُحُوراً وَلَهُمْ عَذابٌ وَاصِبٌ

إِلاَّ مَنْ خَطِفَ الْخَطْفَةَ فَأَتْبَعَهُ شِهَابٌ ثَاقِبٌ

Verily, We have adorned the near heaven with the stars (for beauty).

And to guard against every rebellious devil.

They cannot listen to the higher group (angels) for they are pelted from every side.

Outcast, and theirs is a constant (or painful) torment.

Except such as snatch away something by stealing, and they are pursued by a flaming fire of piercing brightness. (37:6-10).

Further, Allah said,

وَلَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا فِى السَّمَاءِ بُرُوجًا وَزَيَّنَّـهَا لِلنَّـظِرِينَ

وَحَفِظْنَـهَا مِن كُلِّ شَيْطَـنٍ رَّجِيمٍ

إِلاَّ مَنِ اسْتَرَقَ السَّمْعَ فَأَتْبَعَهُ شِهَابٌ مُّبِينٌ

And indeed, We have put the big stars in the heaven and We beautified it for the beholders.

And We have guarded it (near heaven) from every Shaytan **Rajim** (outcast Shaytan).

Except him (devil) who steals the hearing then he is pursued by a clear flaming fire. (15:16-18)

There are several similar Ayat.

It was also said that **Rajim** means, the person who throws or bombards things, because the devil throws doubts and evil thoughts in people's hearts.

The first meaning is more popular and accurate.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَـنِ الرَّحِيمِ

001:1 In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

الْحَمْدُ للّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

001:2 All praise and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of all that exists,

الرَّحْمـنِ الرَّحِيمِ

001:3 the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

مَـالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

001:4 The Owner of the Day of Recompense.

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

001:5 You we worship, and You we ask for help.

اهدِنَــــا الصِّرَاطَ المُستَقِيمَ

001:6 Guide us to the straight path.

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنعَمتَ عَلَيهِمْ غَيرِ المَغضُوبِ عَلَيهِمْ وَلاَ الضَّالِّينَ

001:7 The way of those upon whom You have bestowed Your grace, not (that) of those who earned Your anger, nor of those who went astray.

Bismillah is the First Ayah of Al-Fatihah

بِسْمِ اللّهِ الرَّحْمَـنِ الرَّحِيمِ (١)

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

The Companions started the Book of Allah with Bismillah:

The scholars also agree that Bismillah is a part of an Ayah in Surah An-Naml (chapter 27).

They disagree over whether it is a separate Ayah before every Surah, or if it is an Ayah, or a part of an Ayah, included in every Surah where the Bismillah appears in its beginning.

Ad-Daraqutni also recorded a Hadith from Abu Hurayrah from the Prophet that supports this Hadith by Ibn Khuzaymah.

Also, similar statements were attributed to `Ali, Ibn `Abbas and others.

The opinion that Bismillah is an Ayah of every Surah, except **Al-Bara'ah** (chapter 9), was attributed to (the Companions)

- Ibn `Abbas,
- Ibn `Umar,
- Ibn Az-Zubayr,
- Abu Hurayrah and `Ali.

This opinion was also attributed to the Tabi`in:

- `Ata', Tawus,
- Sa`id bin Jubayr,
- Makhul and
- Az-Zuhri.

This is also the view of

- Abdullah bin Al-Mubarak,
- Ash-Shafi`i,

- Ahmad bin Hanbal, (in one report from him)
- Ishaq bin Rahwayh and
- Abu `Ubayd Al-Qasim bin Salam.

On the other hand, Malik, Abu Hanifah and their followers said that **Bismillah** is not an Ayah in **Al-Fatihah** or any other Surah.

Dawud said that it is a separate Ayah in the beginning of every Surah, not part of the Surah itself, and this opinion was also attributed to Ahmad bin Hanbal.

Basmalah aloud in the Prayer

As for **Basmalah** aloud during the prayer, those who did not agree that it is a part of **Al-Fatihah**, state that the **Basmalah** should not be aloud.

The scholars who stated that **Bismillah** is a part of every Surah (except chapter 9) had different opinions; some of them, such as Ash-Shafi`i, said that one should recite **Bismillah** with **Al-Fatihah** aloud. This is also the opinion of many among the Companions, the **Tabi`in** and the Imams of Muslims from the **Salaf** and the later generations. For instance, this is the opinion of

- Abu Hurayrah,
- Ibn `Umar,
- Ibn `Abbas,
- Mu`awiyah,
- `Umar
- `Ali

according to Ibn `Abdul-Barr and Al-Bayhaqi.

Also, the Four Khalifahs - as Al-Khatib reported - were said to have held this view although the report from them is contradicted.

The **Tabi`in** scholars who gave this Tafsir include

- Sa`id bin Jubayr,

- Ikrimah, Abu Qilabah,
- Az-Zuhri,
- Ali bin Al-Hasan, his son Muhammad,
- Sa`id bin Al-Musayyib,
- Ata',
- Tawus,
- Mujahid,
- Salim,
- Muhammad bin Ka`b Al-Qurazi,
- Abu Bakr bin Muhammad bin `Amr bin Hazm,
- Abu Wa'il,
- Ibn Sirin,
- Muhammad bin Al-Munkadir,
- Ali bin `Abdullah bin `Abbas, his son Muhammad,
- Nafi` the freed slave of Ibn `Umar,
- Zayd bin Aslam,
- Umar bin `Abdul-Aziz,
- Al-Azraq bin Qays,
- Habib bin Abi Thabit,
- Abu Ash-Sha`tha',
- Makhul and
- Abdullah bin Ma`qil bin Muqarrin.

Also, Al-Bayhaqi added `Abdullah bin Safwan, and Muhammad bin Al-Hanafiyyah to this list.

In addition, Ibn `Abdul-Barr added `Amr bin Dinar.

The proof that these scholars relied on is that, since **Bismillah** is a part of **Al-Fatihah**, it should be recited aloud like the rest of **Al-Fatihah**.

Also, An-Nasa'i recorded in his Sunan, Ibn Hibban and Ibn Khuzaymah in their Sahihs and Al-Hakim in the Mustadrak, that Abu Hurayrah once performed the

prayer and recited **Bismillah** aloud. After he finished the prayer, he said,

> "Among you, I perform the prayer that is the closest to the prayer of the Messenger of Allah .''

Ad-Daraqutni, Al-Khatib and Al-Bayhaqi graded this **Hadith Sahih**.

Furthermore, in Sahih Al-Bukhari it is recorded that Anas bin Malik was asked about the recitation of the Prophet.

He said, "His recitation was unhurried.''

He then demonstrated that and recited, while lengthening the recitation of **Bismillah Ar-Rahman Ar-Rahim**,

Also, in the Musnad of Imam Ahmad, the Sunan of Abu Dawud, the Sahih of Ibn Hibban and the Mustadrak of Al-Hakim - it is recorded that Umm Salamah said,

> "The Messenger of Allah used to distinguish each Ayah during his recitation,
>
> بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَـنِ الرَّحِيمِ
>
> الْحَمْدُ للَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَـلَمِينَ
>
> الرَّحْمَـنِ الرَّحِيمِ
>
> مَـلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ
>
> In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.
>
> All praise and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of all that exists,
>
> the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.
>
> The Owner of the Day of Recompense.''

Ad-Daraqutni graded the chain of narration for this **Hadith Sahih**.

Furthermore, Imam Abu `Abdullah Ash-Shafi`i and Al-Hakim in his Mustadrak, recorded that Mu`awiyah led the prayer in Al-Madinah and did not recite the **Bismillah**.

The **Muhajirin** who were present at that prayer criticized that. When Mu`awiyah led the following prayer, he recited the **Bismillah** aloud.

The Hadiths mentioned above provide sufficient proof for the opinion that the **Bismillah** is recited aloud.

As for the opposing evidences and the scientific analysis of the narrations mentioned their weaknesses or otherwise it is not our desire to discuss this subject at this time.

Other scholars stated that the **Bismillah** should not be recited aloud in the prayer, and this is the established practice of the Four Khalifahs, as well as `Abdullah bin Mughaffal and several scholars among the Tabi`in and later generations.

It is also the **Madhhab** (view) of Abu Hanifah, Ath-Thawri and Ahmad bin Hanbal.

Imam Malik stated that the **Bismillah** is not recited aloud or silently. This group based their view upon what Imam Muslim recorded that

> `A'ishah said that the Messenger of Allah used to start the prayer by reciting the **Takbir** (**Allahu Akbar**; Allah is Greater) and then recite, الْحَمْدُ للَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَلَمِينَ All praise and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of all that exists. (Ibn Abi Hatim 1:2).

Also, the Two Sahihs recorded that Anas bin Malik said,

> "I prayed behind the Prophet , Abu Bakr, `Umar and `Uthman and they used to start their prayer with, الْحَمْدُ للَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَلَمِينَ All praise and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of all that exists.

Muslim added,

"And they did not mention, بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَـنِ الرَّحِيمِ (In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful) whether in the beginning or the end of the recitation.''

Similar is recorded in the Sunan books from `Abdullah bin Mughaffal, (may Allah be pleased with him).

These are the opinions held by the respected Imams, and their statements are similar in that they agree that the prayer of those who recite **Al-Fatihah** aloud or in secret is correct. All the favor is from Allah.

The Virtue of Al-Fatihah

Imam Ahmad recorded in his Musnad, that a person who was riding behind the Prophet said, "The Prophet's animal tripped, so I said, `Cursed Shaytan.'

The Prophet said,

لَا تَقُلْ: تَعِسَ الشَّيْطَانُ،

فَإِنَّكَ إِذَا قُلْتَ: تَعِسَ الشَّيْطَانُ، تَعَاظَمَ وَقَالَ: بِقُوَّتِي صَرَعْتُهُ،

وَإِذَا قُلْتَ: بِاسْمِ اللهِ تَصَاغَرَ حَتى يَصِيرَ مِثْلَ الذُبَابِ

Do not say, 'Cursed Shaytan,'

for if you say these words, Satan becomes arrogant and says, 'With my strength I made him fall.'

When you say, 'Bismillah,' Satan will become as small as a fly.

Further, An-Nasa'i recorded in his book Al-Yawm wal-Laylah, and also Ibn Marduwyah in his Tafsir that Usamah bin `Umayr said,

"I was riding behind the Prophet...'' and he mentioned the rest of the above Hadith.

The Prophet said in this narration,

لَا تَقُلْ هكَذَا فَإِنَّهُ يَتَعَاظَمُ حَتَّى يَكُونَ كَالْبَيْتِ،

وَلَكِنْ قُلْ: بِسْمِ اللهِ، فَإِنَّهُ يَصْغَرُ حَتَّى يَكُونَ كَالذُبَابَةِ

Do not say these words, because then Satan becomes larger; as large as a house.

Rather, say, '**Bismillah**,' because Satan then becomes as small as a fly.

This is the blessing of reciting **Bismillah**.

Basmalah is recommended before performing any Deed

Basmalah (reciting **Bismillah**) is recommended before starting any action or deed. For instance, **Basmalah** is recommended before starting a Khutbah (speech).

The **Basmalah** is also recommended before one enters the place where he wants to relieve himself, there is a Hadith concerning this practice.

Further, **Basmalah** is recommended at the beginning of ablution, for Imam Ahmad and the Sunan compilers recorded that Abu Hurayrah, Sa`id bin Zayd and Abu Sa`id narrated from the Prophet , لَا وُضُوءَ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَذْكُرِ اسْمَ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ There is no valid ablution for he who did not mention Allah's Name in it.

This Hadith is **Hasan** (good).

Also, the **Basmalah** is recommended before eating, for Muslim recorded in his Sahih that the Messenger of Allah said to `Umar bin Abi Salamah while he was a child under his care,

قُلْ بِسْمِ اللهِ وَكُلْ بِيَمِينِكَ وَكُلْ مِمَّا يَلِيكَ

- Say Bismillah,
- eat with your right hand and
- eat from whatever is next to you.

Some of the scholars stated that **Basmalah** before eating is obligatory.

Basmalah before having sexual intercourse is also recommended. The Two Sahihs recorded that Ibn `Abbas said that the Messenger of Allah said,

لَوْ أَنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ إِذَا أَرَادَ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ أَهْلَهُ قَالَ:

بِسْمِ اللهِ اللَّهُمَّ جَنِّبْنَا الشَّيْطَانَ وَجَنِّبِ الشَّيْطَانَ مَا رَزَقْتَنَا،
فَإِنَّهُ إِنْ يُقَدَّرْ بَيْنَهُمَا وَلَدٌ لَمْ يَضُرَّهُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَبَدًا

If anyone of you before having sexual relations with his wife says,

'In the Name of Allah.

O Allah! Protect us from Satan and also protect what you grant us (meaning the coming offspring) from Satan,'

and if it is destined that they should have a child then, Satan will never be able to harm that child.

The Meaning of "Allah"

Allah is the Name of the Lord, the Exalted.

It is said that Allah is the Greatest Name of Allah, because it is referred to when describing Allah by the various attributes. For instance, Allah said,

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِى لاَ إِلَـهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَـدَةِ هُوَ الرَّحْمَـنُ الرَّحِيمُ

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِى لاَ إِلَـهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَـمُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيْمِنُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ سُبْحَـنَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَـلِقُ الْبَارِىءُ الْمُصَوِّرُ لَهُ الأَسْمَآءُ الْحُسْنَى يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِى السَّمَـوَتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

He is Allah, beside Whom **La ilaha illa Huwa** (none has the right to be worshipped but He) the Knower of the unseen and the seen. He is the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

He is Allah, beside Whom **La ilaha illa Huwa**, the King, the Holy, the One free from all defects, the Giver of security, the Watcher over His creatures, the Almighty, the Compeller, the Supreme. Glory be to Allah! (High is He) above all that they associate as partners with Him.

He is Allah, the Creator, the Inventor of all things, the Bestower of forms. To Him belong the Best Names. All

that is in the heavens and the earth glorify Him. And He is the Almighty, the Wise. (59:22-24).

Hence, Allah mentioned several of His Names as Attributes for His Name Allah.

Similarly, Allah said,

وَلِلَّهِ الأَسْمَآءُ الْحُسْنَى فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا

And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allah, so call on Him by them. (7:180),

and,

قُلِ ادْعُواْ اللَّهَ أَوِ ادْعُواْ الرَّحْمَـنَ أَيًّا مَّا تَدْعُواْ فَلَهُ الأَسْمَآءَ الْحُسْنَى

Say (O Muhammad): "Invoke Allah or invoke the Most Gracious (Allah), by whatever name you invoke Him (it is the same), for to Him belong the Best Names.'' (17:110)

Also, the Two Sahihs recorded that Abu Hurayrah said that the Messenger of Allah said,

إِنَّ للهِ تِسْعَةً وَتِسْعِينَ اسْمًا، مِائَةً إِلَّا وَاحِدًا، مَنْ أَحْصَاهَا دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ

Allah has ninety-nine Names, one hundred minus one, whoever counts (and preserves) them, will enter Paradise.

These Names were mentioned in a Hadith recorded by At-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah, and there are several differences between these two narrations.

The Meaning of Ar-Rahman Ar-Rahim - the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Ar-Rahman and **Ar-Rahim** are two names derived from **Ar-Rahmah** (the mercy), but **Rahman** has more meanings that pertain to mercy than **Ar-Rahim**.

There is a statement by Ibn Jarir that indicates that there is a consensus on this meaning.

Further, Al-Qurtubi said, "The proof that these names are derived (from **Ar-Rahmah**), is what At-Tirmidhi recorded - and graded Sahih from `Abdur-Rahman bin `Awf that he heard the Messenger of Allah say,

قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالى:

أَنَا الرَّحْمنُ خَلَقْتُ الرَّحِمَ وَشَقَقْتُ لَهَا اسْمًا مِنِ اسْمِي، فَمَنْ وَصَلَهَا وَصَلْتُهُ وَمَنْ قَطَعَها قَطَعْتُهُ

> Allah the Exalted said,
>
> 'I Am **Ar-Rahman**. I created the **Raham** (womb, i.e. family relations) and derived a name for it from My Name. Hence, whoever keeps it, I will keep ties to him, and whoever severs it, I will sever ties with him.'

He then said, "This is a text that indicates the derivation.''

He then said,

> "The Arabs denied the name **Ar-Rahman**, because of their ignorance about Allah and His attributes.''

Al-Qurtubi said, "It was said that both **Ar-Rahman** and **Ar-Rahim** have the same meaning, such as the words **Nadman** and **Nadim**, as Abu `Ubayd has stated.

Abu `Ali Al-Farisi said, **`Ar-Rahman**, which is exclusively for Allah, is a name that encompasses every type of mercy that Allah has. **Ar-Rahim** is what effects the believers, for Allah said,

وَكَانَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَحِيماً

> And He is ever **Rahim** (merciful) to the believers. ' (33:43)

Also, Ibn `Abbas said - about **Ar-Rahman** and **Ar-Rahim**,

> `They are two soft names, one of them is softer than the other (meaning it carries more implications of mercy).'

Ibn Jarir said; As-Surri bin Yahya At-Tamimi narrated to me that `Uthman bin Zufar related that Al-`Azrami said about **Ar-Rahman** and **Ar-Rahim**,

> "He is **Ar-Rahman** with all creation and **Ar-Rahim** with the believers.''
>
> Hence. Allah's statements,
>
> ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ الرَّحْمَـنُ
>
> > Then He rose over **(Istawa)** the Throne (in a manner that suits His majesty), **Ar-Rahman**. (25:59),
>
> and,
>
> الرَّحْمَـنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى
>
> **Ar-Rahman** (Allah) rose over **(Istawa)** the (Mighty) Throne (in a manner that suits His majesty. (20:5)

Allah thus mentioned the **Istawa** - rising over the Throne - along with His Name **Ar-Rahman**, to indicate that His mercy encompasses all of His creation.

Allah also said,

وَكَانَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَحِيماً

> And He is ever **Rahim** (merciful) to the believers, thus encompassing the believers with His Name **Ar-Rahim**. They said,

> "This testifies to the fact that **Ar-Rahman** carries a broader scope of meanings pertaining to the mercy of Allah with His creation in both lives. Meanwhile, **Ar-Rahim** is exclusively for the believers.''
>
> Yet, we should mention that there is a supplication that reads,
>
> رَحْمنَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَرَحِيمَهُمَا

The **Rahman** and the **Rahim** of this life and the Hereafter.

Allah's Name **Ar-Rahman** is exclusively His. For instance, Allah said,

قُلِ ادْعُواْ اللَّهَ أَوِ ادْعُواْ الرَّحْمَـنَ أَيًّا مَّا تَدْعُواْ فَلَهُ الأٌّسْمَآءَ الْحُسْنَى

Say (O Muhammad): "Invoke Allah or invoke **Ar-Rahman** (Allah), by whatever name you invoke Him (it is the same), for to Him belong the Best Names. (17:110)

and,

وَاسْئلْ مَنْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ مِن رُّسُلِنَآ أَجَعَلْنَا مِن دُونِ الرَّحْمَـنِ ءَالِهَةً يُعْبَدُونَ

And ask (O Muhammad) those of Our Messengers whom We sent before you: "Did We ever appoint alihah (gods) to be worshipped besides **Ar-Rahman** (Most Gracious, Allah).'' (43:45)

Further, when Musaylimah the Liar called himself the Rahman of Yamamah, Allah made him known by the name `Liar' and exposed him. Hence, whenever Musaylimah is mentioned, he is described as `the Liar'. He became an example for lying among the residents of the cities and villages and the residents of the deserts, the bedouins.

Therefore, Allah first mentioned His Name - **Allah** - that is exclusively His and described this Name by **Ar-Rahman**, which no one else is allowed to use, just as Allah said,

قُلِ ادْعُواْ اللَّهَ أَوِ ادْعُواْ الرَّحْمَـنَ أَيًّا مَّا تَدْعُواْ فَلَهُ الأٌّسْمَآءَ الْحُسْنَى

Say (O Muhammad): "Invoke Allah or invoke **Ar-Rahman** (Allah), by whatever name you invoke

Him (it is the same), for to Him belong the Best Names.'' (17:110)

Only Musaylimah and those who followed his misguided ways described Musaylimah by Ar-Rahman.

As for Allah's Name **Ar-Rahim**, Allah has described others by it. For instance, Allah said,

لَقَدْ جَآءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ

Verily, there has come unto you a Messenger (Muhammad) from amongst yourselves (i.e. whom you know well). It grieves him that you should receive any injury or difficulty. He (Muhammad) is anxious over you (to be rightly guided) for the believers (he is) kind (full of pity), and **Rahim** (merciful)) (9:128).

Allah has also described some of His creation using some of His other Names. For instance, Allah said,

إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا الإِنسَـنَ مِن نُّطْفَةٍ أَمْشَاجٍ نَّبْتَلِيهِ فَجَعَلْنَـهُ سَمِيعاً بَصِيراً

Verily, We have created man from **Nutfah** (drops) of mixed semen (sexual discharge of man and woman), in order to try him, so We made him hearer **(Sami`)** and seer **(Basir)**. (76:2)

In conclusion, there are several of Allah's Names that are used as names for others besides Allah. Further, some of Allah's Names are exclusive for Allah alone, such as Allah, **Ar-Rahman**, **Al-Khaliq** (the Creator), **Ar-Raziq** (the Sustainer), and so forth.

Hence, Allah started the **Tasmiyah** (meaning, `In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious Most Merciful') with His Name, Allah, and described Himself as **Ar-Rahman**, (Most Gracious) which is softer and more general than **Ar-Rahim**. The most honorable Names are mentioned first, just as Allah did here.

A Hadith narrated by Umm Salamah stated that the recitation of the Messenger of Allah was slow and clear, letter by letter,

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَـنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ للَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَـلَمِينَ

الرَّحْمَـنِ الرَّحِيمِ

مَـلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

All the praises and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of all that exists.

The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

The Owner of the Day of Recompense. (1:1-4)

And this is how a group of scholars recite it. Others connected the recitation of the **Tasmiyah** to A**l-Hamd**.

The Meaning of Al-Hamd

الْحَمْدُ للّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (٢)

Al-Hamd be to Allah, the Lord of all that exists.

Abu Ja`far bin Jarir said, "The meaning of الْحَمْدُ للَّهِ **Al-Hamdu Lillah** (all praise and thanks be to Allah) is:

> all thanks are due purely to Allah, alone, not any of the objects that are being worshipped instead of Him, nor any of His creation.

These thanks are due to Allah's innumerable favors and bounties that only He knows the amount of. Allah's bounties include creating the tools that help the creation worship Him, the physical bodies with which they are able to implement His commands, the sustenance that He provides them in this life, and the comfortable life He has granted them, without anything or anyone compelling Him to do so. Allah also warned His creation and alerted them about the means and methods with which they can earn eternal dwelling in the residence of

everlasting happiness. All thanks and praise are due to Allah for these favors from beginning to end.''

Further, Ibn Jarir commented on the Ayah, الْحَمْدُ لِلَّه **Al-Hamdu Lillah,** that it means,

> "A praise that Allah praised Himself with, indicating to His servants that they too should praise Him, as if Allah had said,
>
> > `Say: All thanks and praise is due to Allah.'

It was said that the statement, الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ **Al-Hamdu Lillah,** (All praise and thanks be to Allah), entails praising Allah by mentioning His most beautiful Names and most honorable Attributes. When one proclaims, `All thanks are due to Allah,' he will be thanking Him for His favors and bounties.''

The Difference between Praise and Thanks

- Hamd is more general, in that it is a statement of praise for one's characteristics, or for what he has done.

- Thanks are given for what was done, not merely for characteristics.

The Statements of the Salaf about Al-Hamd

Hafs mentioned that `Umar said to `Ali,

> "We know **La ilaha illallah, Subhan Allah** and **Allahu Akbar**. What about **Al-Hamdu Lillah**''
>
> Ali said,
>
> > "A statement that Allah liked for Himself, was pleased with for Himself and He likes that it be repeated.''

Also, Ibn `Abbas said,

> "**Al-Hamdu Lillah** is the statement of appreciation.

When the servant says **Al-Hamdu Lillah**, Allah says, `My servant has praised Me.''

Ibn Abi Hatim recorded this Hadith.

The Virtues of Al-Hamd

Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal recorded that Al-Aswad bin Sari` said,

"I said, `O Messenger of Allah! Should I recite to you words of praise for My Lord, the Exalted, that I have collected' He said,

أَمَا إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يُحِبُّ الْحَمْدَ

Verily, your Lord likes **Al-Hamd**. ''

An-Nasa'i also recorded this Hadith.

Furthermore, Abu `Isa At-Tirmidhi, An-Nasa'i and Ibn Majah recorded that Musa bin Ibrahim bin Kathir related that Talhah bin Khirash said that Jabir bin `Abdullah said that the Messenger of Allah said,

أَفْضَلُ الذِّكْرِ لَا إِلهَ إِلَّا اللهُ، وَأَفْضَلُ الدُّعَاءِ الْحَمْدُلِلهِ

- The best **Dhikr** (remembering Allah) is **La ilaha illallah** and

- the best supplication is **Al-Hamdu Lillah**.

At-Tirmidhi said that this Hadith is **Hasan Gharib**.

Also, Ibn Majah recorded that Anas bin Malik said that the Messenger of Allah said,

مَا أَنْعَمَ اللهُ عَلَى عَبْدٍنِعْمَةً فَقَالَ: الْحَمْدُ للهِ، إِلَّا كَانَ الَّذِي أَعْطَى أَفْضَلَ مِمَّا أَخَذَ

No servant is blessed by Allah and says,**`Al-Hamdu Lillah'**, except that what he was given is better than that which he has himself acquired.

Further, in his Sunan, Ibn Majah recorded that Ibn `Umar said that the Messenger of Allah said,

إِنَّ عَبْدًا مِنْ عِبَادِ اللهِ قَالَ

:يَا رَبِّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ كَمَا يَنْبَغِي لِجَلَالِ وَجْهِكَ وَعَظِيمِ سُلْطَانِكَ.

فَعَضَلَتْ بِالْمَلَكَيْنِ فَلَمْ يَدْرِيَا كَيْفَ يَكْتُبَانِهَا فَصَعِدَا إِلَى اللهِ فَقَالَا:

يَا رَبَّنَا إِنَّ عَبْدًا قَدْ قَالَ مَقَالَةً لَا نَدْرِي كَيْفَ نَكْتُبُهَا،

قَالَ اللهُ، وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا قَالَ عَبْدُهُ: مَاذَا قَالَ عَبْدِي؟

قَالَا: يَا رَبِّ إِنَّهُ قَالَ: لَكَ الْحَمْدُ يَا رَبِّ كَمَا يَنْبَغِي لِجَلَالِ وَجْهِكَ وَعَظِيمِ سُلْطَانِكَ.

فَقَالَ اللهُ لَهُمَا: اكْتُبَاهَا كَمَا قَالَ عَبْدِي، حَتَّى يَلْقَانِي فَأَجْزِيهِ بِهَا.

A servant of Allah once said,

`O Allah! Yours is the **Hamd** that is suitable for the grace of Your Face and the greatness of Your Supreme Authority.'

The two angels were confused as to how to write these words. They ascended to Allah and said,

`O our Lord! A servant has just uttered a statement and we are unsure how to record it for him.'

Allah said while having more knowledge in what His servant has said, 'What did My servant say'

They said, `He said, `O Allah! Yours is the **Hamd** that is suitable for the grace of Your Face and the greatness of Your Supreme Authority.'

Allah said to them, `Write it as My servant has said it, until he meets Me and then I shall reward him for it.

Al before Hamd encompasses all Types of Thanks and Appreciation for Allah

The letters **Alif** and **Lam** before the word **Hamd** serve to encompass all types of thanks and appreciation for Allah, the Exalted. A Hadith stated,

اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ كُلُّهُ، وَلَكَ الْمُلْكُ كُلُّهُ، وَبِيَدِكَ الْخَيْرُ كُلُّهُ، وَإِلَيْكَ يُرْجَعُ الْأَمْرُ كُلُّهُ

O Allah!

All of **Al-Hamd** is due to You,

You own all the ownership,

all types of good are in Your Hand and all affairs belong to You.

The Meaning of Ar-Rabb, the Lord

Ar-Rabb is the owner who has full authority over his property.

Ar-Rabb, linguistically means, the master or the one who has the authority to lead.

All of these meanings are correct for Allah. When it is alone, the word **Rabb** is used only for Allah. As for other than Allah, it can be used to say **Rabb Ad-Dar**, the master of such and such object.

Further, it was reported that **Ar-Rabb** is Allah's Greatest Name.

The Meaning of Al-`Alamin

Al-`Alamin** is plural for **`Alam, which encompasses everything in existence except Allah. The word **`Alam** is itself a plural word, having no singular form.

The **`Alamin** are different creations that exist in the heavens and the earth, on land and at sea. Every generation of creation is called an **`Alam**.

Al-Farra` and Abu `Ubayd said,

"Alam includes all that has a mind, the Jinns, mankind, the angels and the devils, but not the animals.''

Also, Zayd bin Aslam and Abu Muhaysin said,

"**Alam** includes all that Allah has created with a soul.''

Further, Qatadah said about, رَبِّ الْعَـلَمِينَ (The Lord of the `Alamin),

"Every type of creation is an Alam.''

Az-Zajjaj also said,

"**Alam** encompasses everything that Allah created, in this life and in the Hereafter.''

Al-Qurtubi commented,

"This is the correct meaning, that the **Alam** encompasses everything that Allah created in both worlds."

Similarly, Allah said,

قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ وَمَا رَبُّ الْعَـلَمِينَ

قَالَ رَبُّ السَّمَـوَتِ وَالاٌّرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَآ إن كُنتُمْ مُّوقِنِينَ

Fir`awn (Pharaoh) said: "And what is the Lord of the `**Alamin''**

Musa (Moses) said:

"The Lord of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, if you seek to be convinced with certainty.'' (26:23-24)

Why is the Creation called `Alam

Alam is derived from `**Alamah**, that is because it is a sign testifying to the existence of its Creator and to His Oneness.

Allah said next,

الرَّحْمَـنِ الرَّحِيمِ (٣)

Ar-Rahman (the Most Gracious), **Ar-Rahim** (the Most Merciful)

We explained these Names in the **Basmalah**.

Al-Qurtubi said,

"Allah has described Himself by **`Ar-Rahman, Ar-Rahim'** after saying `the Lord of the **Alamin'**,

so His statement here includes a warning, and then an encouragement.

Similarly, Allah said,

نَبِّىءْ عِبَادِى أَنِّى أَنَا الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ
وَأَنَّ عَذَابِى هُوَ الْعَذَابُ الأٌّلِيمُ

Declare (O Muhammad) unto My servants, that truly, I am the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful. And that My torment is indeed the most painful torment. (15:49-50)

Allah said,

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ سَرِيعُ الْعِقَابِ وَإِنَّهُ لَغَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

Surely, your Lord is swift in retribution, and certainly He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (6:165)

Hence, **Rabb** contains a warning while **Ar-Rahman Ar-Rahim** encourages.

Further, Muslim recorded in his Sahih that the Messenger of Allah said,

لَوْ يَعْلَمُ الْمُؤْمِنُ مَا عِنْدَ اللهِ مِنَ الْعُقُوبَةِ مَا طَمِعَ فِي جَنَّتِهِ أَحَدٌ، وَلَوْ يَعْلَمُ الْكَافِرُ مَا عِنْدَ اللهِ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ مَا قَنَطَ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ أَحَدٌ

If the believer knew what punishment Allah has, none would have hope in acquiring His Paradise, and if the disbeliever knew what mercy Allah has, none will lose hope of earning His earning.

Indicating Sovereignty on the Day of Judgment

مَـالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ (٤)

The Owner of the Day of Recompense.

Allah mentioned His sovereignty of the Day of Resurrection, but this does not negate His sovereignty over all other things. For Allah mentioned that He is the

Lord of existence, including this earthly life and the Hereafter. Allah only mentioned the Day of Recompense here because on that Day, no one except Him will be able to claim ownership of anything whatsoever. On that Day, no one will be allowed to speak without His permission.

Similarly, Allah said,

> يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الرُّوحُ وَالْمَلَـئِكَةُ صَفّاً لاَّ يَتَكَلَّمُونَ إِلاَّ مَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَـنُ وَقَالَ صَوَاباً
>
> The Day that **Ar-Ruh** (Jibril (Gabriel) or another angel) and the angels will stand forth in rows, they will not speak except him whom the Most Gracious (Allah) allows, and he will speak what is right. (78:38),

and,

> وَخَشَعَتِ الأَصْوَاتُ لِلرَّحْمَـنِ فَلاَ تَسْمَعُ إِلاَّ هَمْساً
>
> And all voices will be humbled for the Most Gracious (Allah), and nothing shall you hear but the low voice of their footsteps.(20:108),

and,

> يَوْمَ يَأْتِ لاَ تَكَلَّمُ نَفْسٌ إِلاَّ بِإِذْنِهِ فَمِنْهُمْ شَقِىٌّ وَسَعِيدٌ
>
> On the Day when it comes, no person shall speak except by His (Allah's) leave. Some among them will be wretched and (others) blessed. (11:105)

Ad-Dahhak said that Ibn `Abbas commented,

> "Allah says,
>
> `On that Day, no one owns anything that they used to own in the world.'"

The Meaning of Yawm Ad-Din

Ibn `Abbas said,

"**Yawm Ad-Din** is the Day of Recompense for the creatures, meaning the Day of Judgment. On that Day, Allah will reckon the creation for their deeds, evil for evil, good for good, except for those whom He pardons.''

In addition, several other Companions, **Tabi`in** and scholars of the **Salaf**, said similarly, for this meaning is apparent and clear from the Ayah.

Allah is Al-Malik (King or Owner)

Allah is the True Owner **(Malik)** (of everything and everyone).

Allah said,

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِى لاَ إِلَـهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَـمُ

He is Allah, beside Whom **La ilaha illa Huwa**, the King, the Holy, the One free from all defects. (59:23).

Also, the Two Sahihs recorded Abu Hurayrah saying that the Prophet said,

أَخْنَعُ اسْمٍ عِنْدَ اللهِ رَجُلٌ تَسَمَّى بِمَلِكِ الْأَمْلَاكِ وَلَا مَالِكَ إِلَّا اللهُ

The most despicable name to Allah is a person who calls himself the king of kings, while there are no owners except Allah.

Also the Two Sahihs recorded that the Messenger of Allah said,

يَقْبِضُ اللهُ الْأَرْضَ وَيَطْوِي السَّمَاءَ بِيَمِينِهِ ثُمَّ يَقُولُ:

أَنَا الْمَلِكُ، أَيْنَ مُلُوكُ الْأَرْضِ؟ أَيْنَ الْجَبَّارُونَ؟ أَيْنَ الْمُتَكَبِّرُونَ؟

(On the Day of Judgement) Allah will grasp the earth and fold up the heavens with His Right Hand and proclaim, 'I Am the King!

Where are the kings of the earth?

Where are the tyrants?

Where are the arrogant'?

Also, in the Glorious Qur'an;

لِّمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ لِلَّهِ الْوَحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ

Whose is the kingdom this Day? (It will be) Allah's, the One, the Irresistible. (40:16)

As for calling someone other than Allah a king in this life, then it is done as a figure of speech. For instance, Allah said,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ بَعَثَ لَكُمْ طَالُوتَ مَلِكًا

Indeed Allah appointed Talut (Saul) as a king over you. (2:247),

and,

وَكَانَ وَرَآءَهُم مَّلِكٌ

As there was a king behind them, (18:79),

and,

إِذْ جَعَلَ فِيكُمْ أَنْبِيَآءَ وَجَعَلَكُمْ مُّلُوكاً

When He made Prophets among you, and made you kings. (5:20)

Also, the Two Sahihs recorded,

مِثْلُ الْمُلُوكِ عَلَى الْأَسِرَّةِ

Just like kings reclining on their thrones.

The Meaning of Ad-Din

Ad-Din means the reckoning, the reward or punishment.

Similarly, Allah said,

يَوْمَئِذٍ يُوَفِّيهِمُ اللَّهُ دِينَهُمُ الْحَقَّ

On that Day Allah will pay them the **(Dinahum)** recompense (of their deeds) in full. (24:25),

and,

أَءِنَّا لَمَدِينُونَ

Shall we indeed (be raised up) to receive reward or punishment (according to our deeds). (37:53)

A Hadith stated,

الْكَيِّسُ مَنْ دَانَ نَفْسَهُ وَعَمِلَ لِمَا بَعْدَ الْمَوتِ

The wise person is he who reckons himself and works for (his life) after death.

meaning, he holds himself accountable.

Also, `Umar said,

- "Hold yourself accountable before you are held accountable,

- weigh yourselves before you are weighed, and

- be prepared for the biggest gathering before He Whose knowledge encompasses your deeds,

يَوْمَئِذٍ تُعْرَضُونَ لاَ تَخْفَى مِنكُمْ خَافِيَةٌ

That Day shall you be brought to Judgement, not a secret of yours will be hidden. (69:18)''

The Linguistic and Religious Meaning of `Ibadah

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ (٥)

You we worship, and You we ask for help.

Linguistically, **`Ibadah** means subdued.

For instance, a road is described as **Mu`abbadah**, meaning, `paved'. In religious terminology, **`Ibadah** implies the utmost love, humility and fear.

The Merit of stating the Object of the Action before the Doer of the Act, and the Merit of these Negations

"You...'',

means, we worship You alone and none else, and rely on You alone and none else. This is the perfect form of obedience and the entire religion is implied by these two ideas.

Some of the **Salaf** said, **Al-Fatihah** is the secret of the Qur'an, while these words are the secret of **Al-Fatihah**, إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ You we worship, and You we ask for help from.

The first part is a declaration of innocence from **Shirk** (polytheism), while the second negates having any power or strength, displaying the recognition that all affairs are controlled by Allah alone. This meaning is reiterated in various instances in the Qur'an. For instance, Allah said,

فَاعْبُدْهُ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَيْهِ وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِغَـفِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

So worship Him (O Muhammad) and put your trust in Him. And your Lord is not unaware of what you (people) do. (11:123),

and,

قُلْ هُوَ الرَّحْمَـنُ ءَامَنَّا بِهِ وَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا

Say:

"He is the Most Gracious (Allah), in Him we believe, and in Him we put our trust.'' (67:29),

and,

رَّبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ لاَ إِلَـهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ فَاتَّخِذْهُ وَكِيلاً

(He alone is) the Lord of the east and the west; **La ilaha illa Huwa** (none has the right to be worshipped but He). So take Him alone as **Wakil** (Disposer of your affairs), (73:9),

and, إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ You we worship, and You we ask for help from.

We should mention that in this Ayah, the type of speech here changes from the third person to direct speech by

using the **Kaf** in the statement **Iyyaka** (You). This is because after the servant praised and thanked Allah, he stands before Him, addressing Him directly;

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

You we worship, and You we ask for help from.

So take Him alone as **Wakil** (Disposer of your affairs)), (73:9),

and, إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ You we worship, and You we ask for help from.

Al-Fatihah indicates the Necessity of Praising Allah. It is required in every Prayer.

The beginning of Surah **Al-Fatihah** contains Allah's praise for Himself by His most beautiful Attributes and indicates to His servants that, they too, should praise Him in the same manner. Hence, the prayer is not valid unless one recites **Al-Fatihah**, if he is able.

The Two Sahihs recorded that `Ubadah bin As-Samit said that the Messenger of Allah said,

لَا صَلَاةَ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَقْرَأْ بِفَاتِحَةِ الْكِتَابِ

There is no valid prayer for whoever does not recite **Al-Fatihah** of the Book.

Also, it is recorded in Sahih Muslim that Abu Hurayrah said that the Messenger of Allah said,

يَقُولُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى :

قَسَمْتُ الصَّلَاةَ بَيْنِي وبَيْنَ عَبْدِي نِصْفَيْنِ، فَنِصْفُهَا لِي ونِصْفُهَا لِعَبْدِي ولِعَبْدِي مَا سَأَلَ، إِذَا قَالَ الْعَبْدُ:

Allah said,

`I divided the prayer into two halves between Myself and My servant, one half is for Me and one half for My servant. My servant shall have what he asks for.' When

the servant says, الْحَمْدُ للَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَلَمِينَ All praise and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of all that exists,

Allah says, `My servant has praised Me.'

When the servant says, الرَّحْمَـنِ الرَّحِيمِ The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful,

Allah says, `My servant has praised Me.'

When the servant says, مَـلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ The Owner of the Day of Recompense),

Allah says, `My servant has glorified Me.'

If the servant says, إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ You we worship, and You we ask for help,

Allah says, `This is between Me and My servant, and My servant shall have what he asked.'

If the servant says, اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ, صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلاَ الضَّآلِّينَ Guide us to the straight path. The path of those on whom You have bestowed Your grace, not (that) of those who have earned Your anger, nor of those who went astray,

Allah says, `This is for My servant, and My servant shall have what he asked.'

Tawhid Al-Uluhiyyah

Ad-Dahhak narrated that Ibn `Abbas said, إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ (You we worship) means,

It is You whom we single out, Whom we fear and Whom we hope in, You alone, our Lord, and none else.

Tawhid Ar-Rububiyyah

وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

And You we ask for help from, to obey you and in all of our affairs.''

Further, Qatadah said that the Ayah, إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ You we worship, and You we ask for help from,

> "Contains Allah's command to us to perform sincere worship for Him and to seek His aid concerning all of our affairs.''

Allah mentioned, إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ You we worship before, وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ And You we ask for help from, because the objective here is the worship, while Allah's help is the tool to implement this objective. Certainly, one first takes care of the most important aspects and then what is less important, and Allah knows best.

Allah called His Prophet an `Abd

Allah called His Messenger an **Abd** (servant) when He mentioned sending down His Book, the Prophet's involvement in inviting to Him, and when mentioning the **Isra'** (overnight journey from Makkah to Jerusalem and then to heaven), and these are the Prophet's most honorable missions. Allah said,

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِى أَنْزَلَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَـبَ

> All praise and thanks be to Allah, Who has sent down to His servant (Muhammad) the Book (the Qur'an), (18:1)

and,

وَأَنَّهُ لَّمَا قَامَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ يَدْعُوهُ

> And when the servant of Allah (Muhammad) stood up invoking Him (his Lord - Allah in prayer), (72:19)

and,

سُبْحَـانَ الَّذِى أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلاً

> Glorified (and Exalted) be He (Allah) (above all that they associate with Him) Who took His servant (Muhammad) for a journey by night. (17:1)

Encouraging the Performance of the Acts of Worship during Times of Distress

Allah also recommended that His Prophet resort to acts of worship during times when he felt distressed because of the disbelievers who defied and denied him.

Allah said,

وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ يَضِيقُ صَدْرُكَ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ

فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَكُنْ مِّنَ السَّـجِدِينَ

وَاعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ

> Indeed, We know that your breast is straitened at what they say.
>
> So glorify the praises of your Lord and be of those who prostrate themselves (to Him).
>
> And worship your Lord until there comes unto you the certainty (i.e. death). (15:97-99)

Why Praise was mentioned First

Since the praise of Allah, Who is being sought for help, was mentioned, it was appropriate that one follows the praise by asking for his need. We stated that Allah said,

فَنِصْفُهَا لِي وَنِصْفُهَا لِعَبْدِي، وَلِعَبْدِي مَا سَأَلَ

> One half for Myself and one half for My servant, and My servant shall have what he asked.

This is the best method for seeking help, by first praising the one whom help is sought from and then asking for His aid, and help for one's self, and for his Muslim brethren by saying. اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ Guide us to the straight path.

This method is more appropriate and efficient in bringing about a positive answer to the pleas, and this is why Allah recommended this better method.

Asking for help may take the form of conveying the condition of the person who is seeking help. For instance, the Prophet Moses said,

رَبِّ إِنِّى لِمَآ أَنزَلْتَ إِلَىَّ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَقِيرٌ

My Lord! Truly, I am in need of whatever good that You bestow on me! (28:24).

Also, one may first mention the attributes of whoever is being asked, such as what Dhun-Nun said,

لاَّ إِلَـهَ إِلاَّ أَنتَ سُبْحَـنَكَ إِنِّى كُنتُ مِنَ الظَّـلِمِينَ

La ilaha illa Anta (none has the right to be worshipped but You (O Allah)), Glorified (and Exalted) be You (above all that they associate with You)! Truly, I have been of the wrongdoers). (21:87)

Further, one may praise Him without mentioning what he needs.

The Meaning of Guidance mentioned in the Surah

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ (٦)

Guide us to the straight path.

The guidance mentioned in the Surah implies being directed and guided to success. Allah said,

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ (Guide us to the straight path) meaning guide, direct, lead and grant us the correct guidance.

Also, وَهَدَيْنَـهُ النَّجْدَينِ And shown him the two ways (good and evil)) (90:10), means, `We explained to him the paths of good and evil.'

Also, Allah said,

اجْتَبَـهُ وَهَدَاهُ إِلَى صِرَطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ

He (Allah) chose him (as an intimate friend) and guided him to a straight path, (16:121),

and,

فَاهْدُوهُمْ إِلَى صِرَٰطِ الْجَحِيمِ

And lead them on to the way of flaming Fire (Hell). (37:23)

Similarly, Allah said,

وَإِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِى إِلَى صِرَٰطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ

And verily, you (O Muhammad) are indeed guiding (mankind) to the straight path. (42:52)

and,

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِى هَدَانَا لِهَـٰذَا

All praise and thanks be to Allah, Who has guided us to this. (7:43)

meaning, guided us and directed us and qualified us for this end - Paradise.

The Meaning of As-Sirat Al-Mustaqim, the Straight Path

As for the meaning of **As-Sirat Al-Mustaqim**, Imam Abu Ja`far At-Tabari said,

"The Ummah agreed that **Sirat Al-Mustaqim**, is the clear path without branches, according to the language of the Arabs. For instance, Jarir bin `Atiyah Al-Khatafi said in a poem,

`The Leader of the faithful is on a path that will remain straight even though the other paths are crooked.''

At-Tabari also stated that, "There are many evidences to this fact.''

At-Tabari then proceeded,

"The Arabs use the term, **Sirat** in reference to every deed and statement whether righteous or wicked. Hence the Arabs would describe the

honest person as being straight and the wicked person as being crooked.

The straight path mentioned in the Qur'an refers to Islam."

Imam Ahmad recorded in his Musnad that An-Nawwas bin Sam`an said that the Prophet said,

ضَرَبَ اللهُ مَثَلًا

صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا، وَعَلَى جَنْبَتَي الصِّرَاطِ سُورَانِ فِيهِمَا أَبْوَابٌ مُفَتَّحَةٌ، وَعَلَى الْأَبْوَابِ سُتُورٌ مُرْخَاةٌ، وَعَلَى بَابِ الصِّرَاطِ دَاعٍ يَقُولُ:

يَاأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ ادْخُلُوا الصِّرَاطَ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَعْوَجُّوا،

وَدَاعٍ يَدْعُو مِنْ فَوْقِ الصِّرَاطِ، فَإِذَا أَرَادَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنْ يَفْتَحَ شَيْئًا مِنْ تِلْكَ الْأَبْوَابِ

قَالَ:وَيْحَكَ لَا تَفْتَحْهُ فَإِنَّكَ إِنْ فَتَحْتَهُ تَلِجْهُ

فَالصِّرَاطُ: الْإِسْلَامُ

وَالسُّورَانِ: حُدُودُ اللهِ وَالْأَبْوَابُ الْمُفَتَّحَةُ مَحَارِمُ اللهِ

وَذَلِكَ الدَّاعِي عَلَى رَأْسِ الصِّرَاطِ كِتَابُ اللهِ، وَالدَّاعِي مِنْ فَوْقِ الصِّرَاطِ وَاعِظُ اللهِ فِي قَلْبِ كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ

Allah has set an example:

a **Sirat** (straight path) that is surrounded by two walls on both sides, with several open doors within the walls covered with curtains. There is a caller on the gate of the **Sirat** who heralds,

'O people! Stay on the path and do not deviate from it.'

Meanwhile, a caller from above the path is also warning any person who wants to open any of these doors,

'Woe unto you! Do not open it, for if you open it you will pass through.'

- The straight path is Islam,

- the two walls are Allah's set limits,

- while the doors resemble what Allah has prohibited.

- The caller on the gate of the Sirat is the Book of Allah,

- while the caller above the Sirat is Allah's admonishment in the heart of every Muslim.

The Faithful ask for and abide by Guidance

If someone asks, "Why does the believer ask Allah for guidance during every prayer and at other times, while he is already properly guided Has he not already acquired guidance?''

The answer to these questions is that if it were not a fact that the believer needs to keep asking for guidance day and night, Allah would not have directed him to invoke Him to acquire the guidance. The servant needs Allah the Exalted every hour of his life to help him remain firm on the path of guidance and to make him even more firm and persistent on it. The servant does not have the power to benefit or harm himself, except by Allah's permission. Therefore, Allah directed the servant to invoke Him constantly, so that He provides him with His aid and with firmness and success.

Indeed, the happy person is he whom Allah guides to ask of Him. This is especially the case if a person urgently needs Allah's help day or night.

Allah said,

يَـأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ءَامِنُواْ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَـبِ الَّذِى نَزَّلَ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَـبِ الَّذِى أَنَزَلَ مِن قَبْلُ

O you who believe!

Believe in Allah, and His Messenger (Muhammad), and the Book (the Qur'an) which He has sent down to His Messenger, and the Scripture which He sent down to those before (him). (4:16)

Therefore, in this Ayah Allah commanded the believers to believe, and this command is not redundant since what is sought here is firmness and continuity of performing the deeds that help one remain on the path of faith.

Also, Allah commanded His believing servants to proclaim,

رَبَّنَا لاَ تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ رَحْمَةً إِنَّكَ أَنتَ الْوَهَّابُ

Our Lord!

Let not our hearts deviate (from the truth) after You have guided us, and grant us mercy from You. Truly, You are the Bestower. (3:8).

Hence, اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ (Guide us to the straight way) means, "Make us firm on the path of guidance and do not allow us to deviate from it.''

Allah then guides,

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنعَمتَ عَلَيهِمْ غَيرِ المَغضُوبِ عَلَيهِمْ وَلاَ الضَّالِّينَ (٧)

The way of those upon whom You have bestowed Your grace, not (that) of those who earned Your anger, nor of those who went astray.

We mentioned the Hadith in which the servant proclaims, اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ (Guide us to the straight way) and Allah says,

"This is for My servant, and My servant shall acquire what he asks for.''

Allah's statement.

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ

The way of those upon whom You have bestowed Your grace, defines the path.

`Those upon whom Allah has bestowed His grace' are those mentioned in **Surat An-Nisa**' (chapter 4), when Allah said,

وَمَن يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُوْلَـئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِم مِّنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَآءِ وَالصَّـلِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ أُولَـئِكَ رَفِيقاً

ذلِكَ الْفَضْلُ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ عَلِيماً

And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger (Muhammad), then they will be in the company of those on whom Allah has bestowed His grace, the Prophets, the Siddiqin (the truly faithful), the martyrs, and the righteous. And how excellent these companions are!

Such is the bounty from Allah, and Allah is sufficient to know. (4:69-70)

Allah's statement,

غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلاَ الضَّآلِّينَ

Not (the way) of those who earned Your anger, nor of those who went astray, meaning:

guide us to the straight path, the path of those upon whom you have bestowed Your grace, that is, the people of guidance, sincerity and obedience to Allah and His Messengers. They are the people who adhere to Allah's commandments and refrain from committing what He has prohibited. But, help us to avoid the path of those whom Allah is angry with, whose intentions are corrupt, who know the truth, yet deviate from it.

Also, help us avoid the path of those who were led astray, who lost the true knowledge and, as a result, are wandering in misguidance, unable to find the correct path.

Allah asserted that the two paths He described here are both misguided when He repeated the negation `not'. These two paths are the paths of the Christians and Jews, a fact that the believer should beware of so that he avoids them. The path of the believers is knowledge of the truth and abiding by it. In comparison, the Jews abandoned practicing the religion, while the Christians lost the true knowledge. This is why `anger' descended upon the Jews, while being described as `led astray' is more appropriate of the Christians. Those who know, but avoid implementing the truth, deserve the anger, unlike those who are ignorant. The Christians want to seek the

true knowledge, but are unable to find it because they did not seek it from its proper resources.

This is why they were led astray. We should also mention that both the Christians and the Jews have earned the anger and are led astray, but the anger is one of the attributes more particular of the Jews. Allah said about the Jews,

مَن لَّعَنَهُ اللَّهُ وَغَضِبَ عَلَيْهِ

> Those (Jews) who incurred the curse of Allah and His wrath. (5:60)

The attribute that the Christians deserve most is that of being led astray, just as Allah said about them,

قَدْ ضَلُّواْ مِن قَبْلُ وَأَضَلُّواْ كَثِيراً وَضَلُّواْ عَن سَوَآءِ السَّبِيلِ

> Who went astray before and who misled many, and strayed (themselves) from the right path, (5:77).

There are several Hadiths and reports from the **Salaf** on this subject.

Imam Ahmad recorded that `Adi bin Hatim said,

"The horsemen of the Messenger of Allah seized my paternal aunt and some other people. When they brought them to the Messenger of Allah, they were made to stand in line before him. My aunt said,

> `O Messenger of Allah! The supporter is far away, the offspring have stopped coming and I am an old woman, unable to serve. Grant me your favor, may Allah grant you His favor.'
>
> He said, `Who is your supporter'
>
> She said, `Adi bin Hatim.'
>
> He said, `The one who ran away from Allah and His Messenger'
>
> She said, `So,

the Prophet freed me.'

When the Prophet came back, there was a man next to him, I think that he was `Ali, who said to her, `Ask him for a means of transportation.'

She asked the Prophet, and he ordered that she be given an animal."

`Adi then said,

"Later on, she came to me and said,

`He (Muhammad) has done a favor that your father (who was a generous man) would never have done. So and-so person came to him and he granted him his favor, and so-and-so came to him and he granted him his favor.'

So I went to the Prophet and found that some women and children were gathering with him, so close that I knew that he was not a king like Kisra (King of Persia) or Caesar.

He said,

`O `Adi! What made you run away, so **that La ilaha illallah** is not proclaimed?

Is there a deity worthy of worship except Allah What made you run away, so that **Allahu Akbar** (Allah is the Greater) is not proclaimed?

Is there anything Greater than Allah?'

I proclaimed my Islam and I saw his face radiate with pleasure and he said:

إِنَّ الْمَغْضُوبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْيَهُودُ وَ إِنَّ الضَّالِّينَ النَّصَارَى

> Those who have earned the anger are the Jews and those who are led astray are the Christians."

This Hadith was also collected by At-Tirmidhi who said that it is **Hasan Gharib**.

Also, when Zayd bin `Amr bin Nufayl went with some of his friends - before Islam - to Ash-Sham seeking the true religion, the Jews said to him,

> "You will not become a Jew unless you carry a share of the anger of Allah that we have earned.''
>
> He said, "I am seeking to escape Allah's anger.''
>
> Also, the Christians said to him,
>
> "If you become one of us you will carry a share in Allah's discontent.''
>
> He said, "I cannot bear it.''
>
> So he remained in his pure nature and avoided worshipping the idols and the polytheistic practices. He became neither a Jew, nor Christian. As for his companions, they became Christians because they found it more pure than Judaism. Waraqah bin Nawfal was among these people until Allah guided him by the hand of His Prophet, when he was sent as Prophet, and Waraqah believed in the revelation that was sent to the Prophet may Allah be pleased with him.

The Summary of Al-Fatihah

The honorable Surah **Al-Fatihah** contains seven Ayat including the praise and thanks of Allah, glorifying Him and praising Him by mentioning His most Beautiful Names and most high Attributes.

It also mentions the Hereafter, which is the Day of Resurrection, and directs Allah's servants to ask of Him, invoking Him and declaring that all power and strength comes from Him.

It also calls to the sincerity of the worship of Allah alone, singling Him out in His divinity, believing in His perfection, being free from the need of any partners, having no rivals nor equals.

Al-Fatihah directs the believers to invoke Allah to guide them to the straight path, which is the true religion, and to help them

remain on that path in this life, and to pass over the actual **Sirat** (bridge over hell that everyone must pass over) on the Day of Judgment. On that Day, the believers will be directed to the gardens of comfort in the company of the Prophets, the truthful ones, the martyrs and the righteous.

Al-Fatihah also encourages performing good deeds, so that the believers will be in the company of the good-doers on the Day of Resurrection. The Surah also warns against following the paths of misguidance, so that one does not end up being gathered with those who indulge in sin, on the Day of Resurrection, including those who have earned the anger and those who were led astray.

The Bounties are because of Allah, not the Deviations

Allah said,

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ

The way of those upon whom you have bestowed Your grace, when He mentioned His favor.

On mentioning anger, Allah said,

غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ

Not (that) of those who earned Your anger, without mentioning the subject, although it is He Who has sent down the anger on them, just as Allah stated in another Ayah,

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْاْ قَوْماً غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِم

Have you (O Muhammad) not seen those (hypocrites) who take as friends a people upon whom is the wrath of Allah (i.e. Jews). (58:14)

Also, Allah relates the misguidance of those who indulged in it, although they were justly misguided according to Allah's appointed destiny. For instance, Allah said,

مَن يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ وَمَن يُضْلِلْ فَلَن تَجِدَ لَهُ وَلِيًّا مُّرْشِدًا

He whom Allah guides, he is the rightly-guided; but he whom He sends astray, for him you will find no **Wali** (guiding friend) to lead him (to the right path). (18:17),

and,

مَن يُضْلِلِ اللَّهُ فَلاَ هَادِيَ لَهُ وَيَذَرُهُمْ فِى طُغْيَـنِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ

Whomsoever Allah sends astray, none can guide him; and He lets them wander blindly in their transgression (7:186).

These and several other Ayat testify to the fact that Allah alone is the One Who guides and misguides, contrary to the belief of the Qadariyyah sect, who claimed that the servants choose and create their own destiny. They rely on some unclear Ayat avoiding what is clear and contradicts their desires. Theirs, is the method of the people who follow their lust, desire and wickedness. An authentic Hadith narrated,

إِذَا رَأَيْتُمُ الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ فَأُولئِكَ الَّذِينَ سَمَّى اللهُ فَاحْذَرُوهُمْ

When you see those who follow what is not so clear in it (the Qur'an), then they are those whom Allah has mentioned (refer to 3:7). Hence, avoid them.

The Prophet was referring to Allah's statement,

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فى قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَـبَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَآءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ

So as for those in whose hearts there is a deviation (from the truth) they follow that which is not entirely clear thereof, seeking **Al-Fitnah** (polytheism and trials), and seeking for its hidden meanings.(3:7)

Verily, no innovator in the religion could ever rely on any authentic evidence in the Qur'an that testifies to his innovation. The Qur'an came to distinguish between

truth and falsehood, and guidance and misguidance. The Qur'an does not contain any discrepancies or contradictions, because it is a revelation from the Most Wise, Worthy of all praise.

Saying Amin

It is recommended to say **Amin** after finishing the recitation of **Al-Fatihah**.

Amin means, "O Allah! Accept our invocation.''

The evidence that saying **Amin** is recommended is contained in what Imams Ahmad, Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi recorded, that Wa'il bin Hujr said,

> "I heard the Messenger of Allah recite, غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلاَ الضَّآلِّينَ (Not (that) of those who earned Your anger, nor of those who went astray), and he said **`Amin'** extending it with his voice.''

Abu Dawud's narration added,

> "Raising his voice with it.''

At-Tirmidhi then commented that this Hadith is **Hasan** and was also narrated from `Ali and Ibn Mas`ud.

Also, Abu Hurayrah narrated that

> whenever the Messenger of Allah would recite, غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلاَ الضَّآلِّينَ (Not (the way) of those who earned Your anger, nor of those who went astray), He would say **Amin** until those who were behind him in the first line could hear him.

Abu Dawud and Ibn Majah recorded this Hadith with the addition,

> "Then the Masjid would shake because of (those behind the Prophet) reciting **Amin**.''

Also, Ad-Daraqutni recorded this Hadith and commented that it is **Hasan**.

Further, Bilal narrated that he said, "O Messenger of Allah! Do not finish saying **Amin** before I can join you.''

This was recorded by Abu Dawud.

In addition, Abu Nasr Al-Qushayri narrated that Al-Hasan and Ja`far As-Sadiq stressed the **`m'** in **Amin**.

Saying **Amin** is recommended for those who are not praying (when reciting **Al-Fatihah**) and is strongly recommended for those who are praying, whether alone or behind the Imam.

The Two Sahihs recorded that the Messenger of Allah said,

إِذَا أَمَّنَ الْإِمَامُ فَأَمِّنُوا، فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ وَافَقَ تَأْمِينُهُ تَأْمِينَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ

When the Imam says, **' Amin'**, then say, **'Amin'**, because whoever says, **Amin'** with the angels, his previous sins will be forgiven.

Muslim recorded that the Messenger of Allah said,

إِذَا قَالَ أَحَدُكُمْ فِي الصَّلَاةِ: آمِينَ، وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ فِي السَّمَاءِ: آمِينَ، فَوَافَقَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا الْأُخْرَى غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ

When any of you says in the prayer, **'Amin`** and the angels in heaven say, **`Amin'**, in unison, his previous sins will be forgiven.

It was said that the Hadith talks about both the angels and the Muslims saying **Amin** at the same time. The Hadith also refers to when the **Amins** said by the angels and the Muslims are equally sincere (thus bringing about forgiveness).

Further, it is recorded in Sahih Muslim that Abu Musa related to the Prophet that he said,

إِذَا قَالَ يَعنِي الْإِمَامَ : وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ، فَقُولُوا: آمِينَ، يُجِبْكُمُ اللهُ

When the Imam says, **`Walad-dallin'**, say, **`Amin'** and Allah will answer your invocation.

In addition, At-Tirmidhi said that **`Amin'** means,

"Do not disappoint our hope'',

while the majority of scholars said that it means.

"Answer our invocation.''

Also, in his Musnad, Imam Ahmad recorded that **`A'ishah** said that when the Jews were mentioned to him, the Messenger of Allah said,

إِنَّهُم لَنْ يَحْسُدُونَا عَلَى شَيْءٍ كَمَا يَحْسُدُونَا عَلَى الْجُمُعَةِ الَّتِي هَدَانَا اللهُ لَهَا وَضَلُّوا عَنْهَا، وَعَلَى الْقِبْلَةِ الَّتِي هَدَانَا اللهُ لَهَا وَضَلُّوا عَنْهَا وَعَلَى قَوْلِنَا خَلْفَ الْإِمَامِ: آمِينَ

- They will not envy us for anything more than they envy us for Friday which we have been guided to, while they were led astray from it,

- and for the **Qiblah** which we were guided to, while they were led astray from it,

- and for our saying `**Amin'** behind the Imam.

Also, Ibn Majah recorded this Hadith with the wording,

مَا حَسَدَتْكُمُ الْيَهُودُ عَلَى شَيْءٍ مَا حَسَدَتْكُمْ عَلَى السَّلَامِ وَالتَّأْمِينِ

The Jews have never envied you more than for your saying the **Salam** (Islamic greeting) and for saying **Amin**.

This is the end of the Tafsir of Surah **At-Fatihah**, and all praise and thanks are due to Allah.